On the influence of the Vajracchedikā upon the Saddharma-puṇḍarikā-sūtra

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What I want to discuss here is the influence of the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* upon the *Saddharma-puṇḍarikā-sūtra*.

There is an important passage in the second chapter of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarikā-sūtra* which reads as follows :

/ I preached creatures the law, Śāriputra, from the one and only standpoint. This is the standpoint of Buddha. There is neither the second nor the third standpoint. (ekam evāhaṃ Śāriputra yānaṃ ārabhya sattvānāṃ dharmam deśayāmi yad idaṃ buddha-yānaṃ. na kiṃ-cic Chāriputra dvitīyaṃ vā tṛtīyaṃ vā yānaṃ samvidyate./

The above quoted passage is an essential one which will explain the idea of *eka-yāna=buddha-yāna=dharmatā*, however, the fact is that in order to comprehend the above phrases it is necessary to turn our attention first to the preceding phrases. It reads as follows :

/ Believe me, Śāriputra ; I am a man who tells the truth (bhūta-vādin), who talks as it is (tathā-vādin), who talks without falsehood (ananyathā-vādin)/

Since these three phrases are put in one phrase, i. e., “no falsehood in words (言不虛妄)” in the Chinese translation by Kumārajīva which corresponds with the phrase “words exclusively without falsehood (言軌無虛)” in the translation by Dharmarakṣa, we may conclude that it was one phrase in the Sanskrit text used by these Chinese translators. But the existing Sanskrit text, Nepal MSS, apparently records three phrases. Though it is premature to make a conclusion whether they were originally three phrases or expanded in later days, yet if we take it for being expanded it may be subjoined after A. D. 265-316 (Darmarakṣa’s translation) or A. D. 406 (Kumārajīva’s translation). Putting this question aside, what I want to raise now is why it was necessary to insert these three phrases. If we consider they

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were inserted, they must have been borrowed from other sūtras. If they were borrowed, it may be said that the sūtra was either Āgama-sūtra or the Mahāyāna-sūtra which was established at least before the years 265–316 and was extensively read. Now I would like to point out that there is no Āgama-sūtra that writes these three phrases side by side. Firstly, the expression “who talks without falsehood” (*ananyathā-vādin*) or *anaññathā-vādin* in Pāli Dialect is not to be found. Neither is there any example of “who talks as it is” (*tathā-vādin*). There is but an example of *tathā-vādinam* found in verse 430 in the *Sutta-nipāta*, however, it differs because it is written in such a context as: “When the devil thus spoke, Buddha told as follows.” (*taṃ tathāvādinam Māraṃ Bhagavā etad abravi*) The Itivuttaka (p. 122.), as well, employs the phrase *tathā-vādi* in such a passage as: “Buddha acts as he speaks and speaks as he acts. It is because he acts as he speaks as he acts that he is called Buddha.” (*yathāvādi tathākāri yathākāri tathāvādi*), however, the phrase written in the context of *yathā tathā* and it is therefore different.

Among these three phrases the one that is found in Āgama-sūtra is “who tells the truth” (*bhūta-vādin*) and it is seen in such sūtras as *the Pāsādika-suttanta*, *the Lakkhaṇa-suttanta* in Dīgha Nikāya and *the Mahā-taṇhāsāṅkhaya-sutta* in Majjhima Nikāya. This phrase are always among the five phrases as follows:

“the monk is the one who speaks when he should (*kalāvādin*)
who tells the truth (*bhūta-vādin*)
who speaks for the benefit (*attha-vādin*)
who preaches the law (*dhmma-vādin*)
who explains the rule. (*vinaya-vādin*)”

Besides, there is a phrase “who tells the truth (*sacca-vādin*)”, but it is used as seen in the passage of the *Udana* and as one among six phrases such as virtuous one (*dhmma-cārino*), one who lives in peace (*sama-cārino*), pious one (*brahma-cārino*), one who tells the truth (*sacca-vādin*), one who observes the moral precepts (*sīlavanto*) and a man of good conduct (*kalyāṇa-dhamma*).

At any rate, three paralleled phrases of *bhūta-vādin*, *tathā-vādin* and *ananyathā-vādin* cannot be found in *Āgama-sūtra*. Therefore, we may conclude that these three phrases of *Saddharma-puṇḍarika-sūtra* were not borrowed from *Āgama-sūtra*. Turning to the *Mahāyāna-sūtras*, they are not written in these sūtras but in the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. The Sanskrit text edited by Dr. Conze reads as follows: (14f)

/bhūta-vādī Subhūte Tathāgataḥ satya-vādy ananyathā-vādī Tathāgataḥ. na vitatha-vādī Tathāgataḥ./

The expression that Buddha talks no falsehood (*na vitatha-vādī*) in one phrase was put in another way in the *Vajracchedikā* by a chain of four phrases such as *bhūta-vādin*, *satya-vādin*, *tathā-vādin* and *ananyathā-vādin*. Among these four, we may regard *bhūta* and *satya* as having the same significance since they were mixed up with each other in their usage, in *Āgama-sūtra*. This will lead us to regard that “talks no falsehood” is expressed by three phrases, i. e., *bhūta-vādin*, *tathā-vādin* and *ananyathā-vādin*. These correspond exactly to the three phrases, *bhūta-vādin*, *tathā-vādin* and *ananyathā-vādin* which replaced only one phrase of “no falsehood in words” in the Sanskrit text used by Kumārajīva and Dharmarakṣa. We can see here the influence of the *Vajracchedikā* upon the *Saddharma-puṇḍarika-sūtra*. As the formation of the *Vajracchedikā* is considered to have taken place during the years 150 and 200 the date seems not to contradict.

Now if we inquire what was the thought significance of adding specially these three phrases, I think a key which enables us to understand lies in the following passage in the *Vajracchedikā*:

/But nevertheless, subhūti, with regard to that dharma which the Tathāgata has fully known, demonstrated, and meditated upon, on account of that there is neither truth nor fraud (*na tatra satyaṃ na mṛṣā*)/

These words declare that in every phases of existence indicated by Lord Buddha there is no actuality in truth or falsehood, in false or true, but it is nothing but reality as exists that is pointed out as it is. To state in this way was *bhūta*, *tathā* and *ananyathā* and *Saddharma-puṇḍarika-sūtra* version of this statement seems to have appeared in such an expression as quoted

before: "I preached creatures the law from the one and only standpoint, and so on." It has already been proved on the basis of vocabulary in *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* that the word *dharmatā* in the concluding passage of the above phrases which ends with the expression; "this is the phase (*dharmatā*) of all existence in every corner of the world" is the synonym of "*Pratītyasamutpāda*" which is the basic thought of the primitive buddhism. *Pratītyasamutpāda* is defined that all things that exist have no absolute subjectivity of their own, but are reciprocally interrelated. From this point of view, the one and only standpoint (*eka-yāna*) written in the second chapter of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra* does not mean that the standpoint of the sūtra is the only absolute one. It must be clearly understood that it is the standpoint which does not regard the difference in religious bodies between the primitive buddhism, the buddhist traditional schools and the *bodhisattva-gaṇa*, or in religious individuals between *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha* and *bodhisattva*, or between monks and lay disciples, or between common mortal person and saint, looking from the point of opposing aspects but it regards them as a single element which inevitably exists interrelating one another. I think it was intended for the purpose of emphasizing the above mentioned character to indicate more clearly the standpoint of "within the law, there is no truth nor falsehood" by supplying those three phrases namely, *bhūta-vādin*, *tathā-vādin* and *ananyathā-vādin*.

Subsequent passage in the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra* explains the five turbidities (*kaṣāya*). The world of past, future and present is of course taught in between, however, the part is the latest insertion, therefore, originally it was followed directly by the explanation of the five turbidities. It states that when a man is in the state of confusion (*lubdha*) among those five turbidities, i. e.,

- turbidity of long period (*kalpa-kaṣāya*)
- turbidity of living things (*sattva-kaṣāya*)
- turbidity of tumultuous mind (*kleśa-kaṣāya*)
- turbidity of prejudice (*dr̥ṣṭi-kaṣāya*)
- turbidity of life (*āyuṣ-kaṣāya*)

and when he cannot plant good seeds, Buddha tries to make the one and only standpoint clear by showing the three standpoints.

The teaching of “turbidity (*kaṣāya*)” seems to have been made as a concrete expression of darkness (*andha-kāra*) stated in the subsequent passage of the one quoted before in the *Vajracchedikā* which goes as follows :

/ A man who has entered darkness (*andhakāra*) would not see anything. (*puruṣo 'ndhakāra-praviṣṭo na kiṃcid api paśyet*) Just so should be viewed a Bodhisattva who has fallen among things (*evaṃ vastu-patito bodhisattvo draṣṭavyo*), and who, fallen among things, renounces a gift. A man with eyes would, when the day breaks and the sun has risen, see manifold colours. Just so should be viewed a Bodhisattva who has not fallen among things. They renounces the gift without having fallen among things. /

In this passage of the *Vajracchedikā*, the word *andhakāra* is synonymous with the word *vastu*, and the word *vastu* signifies object of consciousness. (At the *Abhidharmakośa* five meanings of *vastu* are explained)

Since the word *andha* of *andha-kāra* signifies darkness and at the same time means turbid water we may, linguistically speaking as well as speaking from the thought contents, think of the existence of a certain correlation. Besides, we find very often in *Āgama-sūtra* metaphors of turbid water and darkness for the man's state of mind being driven by avarice, veiled by wrath or ignorance and being wrapped in doubt. For example *Brāhmaṇa-vagga* in *Aṅguttara Nikāya* writes (A. N. III. p. 233.) as follows :

Suppose there is water in a bowl which is stirred (*luḍḍito*) and as a result becomes turbid (*avilo*) and is put in the darkness. Although a man who has eyes stares at his face in the water, he cannot truly see or know his face.

This passage precedes the above quoted phrase in the *Vajracchedikā* which is later to be developed into the five turbidities in the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*.